

HARMINIUS FAIRMAIRE, 1852 (COLEOPTERA); PROPOSED
DESIGNATION OF A TYPE SPECIES UNDER THE PLENARY
POWERS. Z.N.(S)2264

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The purpose of this paper is to preserve the generic name *Harminius* Fairmaire, 1852, in the sense in which it has generally been used since 1875 (Bonvouloir, *Ann. Soc. ent. France* (4) vol. suppl., 907 pp.). Fairmaire, 1852 *Ann. Soc. ent. France* (2), vol. 80–81) described the new genus *Harminius* with the new species *H. castaneus* from Sicily as the type species by monotypy. He placed the genus in the EUCNEMIDAE, but all subsequent authors since Bonvouloir have placed it in the ELATERIDAE.

2. Fairmaire's type material appears to be lost. Miss C.M.F. von Hayek (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) tells me that she cannot find it in the Fairmaire, Candèze, Fleutiaux and Oberthür collections at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, or in the Candèze collection at the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles in Brussels. *H. castaneus* can thus only properly be treated as a species *incertae sedis*, since Fairmaire's original description and figure do not show whether he was describing an eucnemid or an elaterid.

3. The species from southern Italy and Sicily that is commonly called *Harminius castaneus* (commonly with *Athous spiniger* Candèze, 1860, *Mem. Soc. r. Sci. Liège*, vol. 15: 460–461 as a synonym) is very distinctive and cannot be confused with any other species except *Athous florentinus* Desbrochers, 1870 (*l'Abeille*, vol. 7: 114) from northern Italy. Neither of these bears any resemblance to the original description of *H. castaneus* Fairmaire, a beetle with a parallel-sided prothorax and a rounded head. I know of no species of *Athous* or related genera with these characters (see Becker, 1978, *Canadian Entomol.* vol. 111 (5): 561–568 for more details).

4. Fiori, 1898, *Atti Soc. Nat. Modena* (3) vol. 16: 162, either overlooked or ignored Fairmaire's *Harminius* when he described *Pseudocorymbites* as a subgenus of *Athous*. He included only one valid species, '*Athous castaneus* Fair.', with *A. spiniger* Candèze, 1860, as a subspecies and *A. florentinus* Desbrochers, 1870 as a synonym of *A. spiniger*. Even though Fiori (and other

authors) misidentified *Harminius castaneus*, *Pseudocorymbites* is still a synonym of *Harminius* because both have the same type species (Articles 67j and 70).

5. I suggest that *Athous spiniger* Candèze be designated as the type species of *Harminius* and *Pseudocorymbites* rather than *Harminius castaneus* for the following reasons:

- (a) the type of *castaneus* cannot be located, but it cannot in any case belong to the species commonly called by this name;
- (b) the syntypes of *spiniger* are available and leave no doubt as to the identity of the species;
- (c) the name *Harminius* has been used for a subgenus of *Athous* or for a genus consistently for over 100 years for *castaneus* auctorum (*non* Fairmaire), *spiniger*, *florentinus*, etc.;
- (d) if the types of *Harminius castaneus* are located, then a new generic name will be needed for *spiniger* and its allies.

6. In order to provide maximum stability of nomenclature, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is hereby requested

- (1) to use its plenary powers to set aside all designations of type species hitherto made for the nominal genera *Harminius* Fairmaire, 1852, and *Pseudocorymbites* Fiori, 1898, and to designate *Athous spiniger* Candèze, 1860 as type species of both genera;
- (2) to place the generic name *Harminius* Fairmaire, 1852 (gender: masculine), type species, by designation under the plenary powers in (1) above, *Athous spiniger* Candèze, 1860, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;
- (3) to place the specific name *spiniger* Candèze, 1860, as published in the binomen *Athous spiniger* (specific name of type species of *Harminius* Fairmaire, 1852 and *Pseudocorymbites* Fiori, 1898) on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (4) to place the generic name *Pseudocorymbites* Fiori, 1898 (a junior objective synonym of *Harminius* Fairmaire, 1852 by reason of the ruling under the plenary powers in (1) above) on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.